From the Ground Up: Assessing and Building the Data Capacity of Community-Based Agencies in the Mission Promise Neighborhood Collaborative

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MISSION PROMISE
COMUNIDAD PROMESA DE LA MISIÓN
NEIGHBORHOOD

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❶ Overview, Background, Objectives

The Mission Promise Neighborhood

San Francisco's Mission Promise Neighborhood (MPN) is a cross-agency initiative, funded by the Department of Education, that aims to improve the lives of children, youth, and families of San Francisco's Mission District.

Data Capacity of MPN

The Department of Education requires that MPN collect and track data from its funded programs and partners. This poses a challenge to agencies that do not have sufficient data infrastructure in place. To respond to this challenge, the Mission Economic Development Agency (MEDA) embarked on a data capacity assessment, which included:
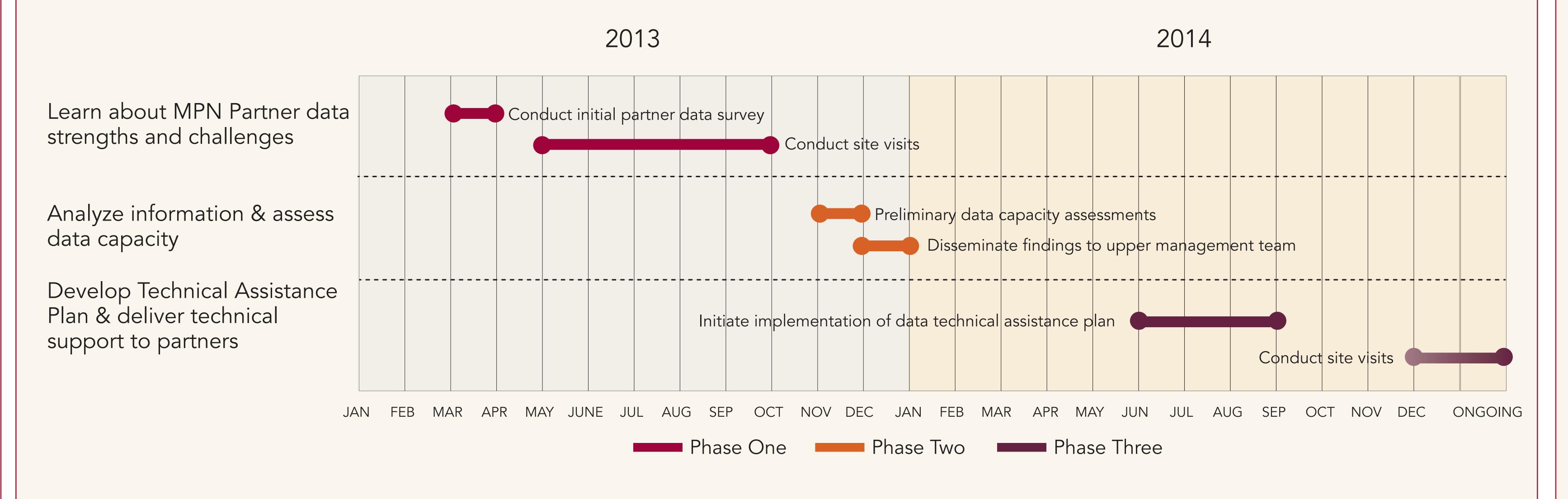
- A data discovery of 24 MPN partner agencies
- A technical assistance plan to support their collection of required MPN data points
- Ongoing technical assistance for developing data collection system for continuous improvement

Objectives of Data Capacity Assessment

- Understand what data partner agencies collect about their programs
- Prepare partners to meet MPN data mandates
- Strengthen partners' ability to achieve measurable results, and use data for continous improvement

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❷ Data Capacity Assessment Process

Over a seven-month period, we conducted two data site visits with each of our 24 partner agencies to better understand their data strengths, challenges, and needs. Information collected during these visits helped us assess areas of improvement around data collection and infrastructure, and develop technical assistance plans to support partners in building their capacity to collect, track, and report information for MPN.

2013 | **2014**

Learn about MPN Partner data strengths and challenges
- Conduct initial partner data survey
- Conduct site visits

Analyze information & assess data capacity
- Preliminary data capacity assessments
- Disseminate findings to upper management team

Develop Technical Assistance Plan & deliver technical support to partners
- Initiate implementation of data technical assistance plan
- Conduct site visits

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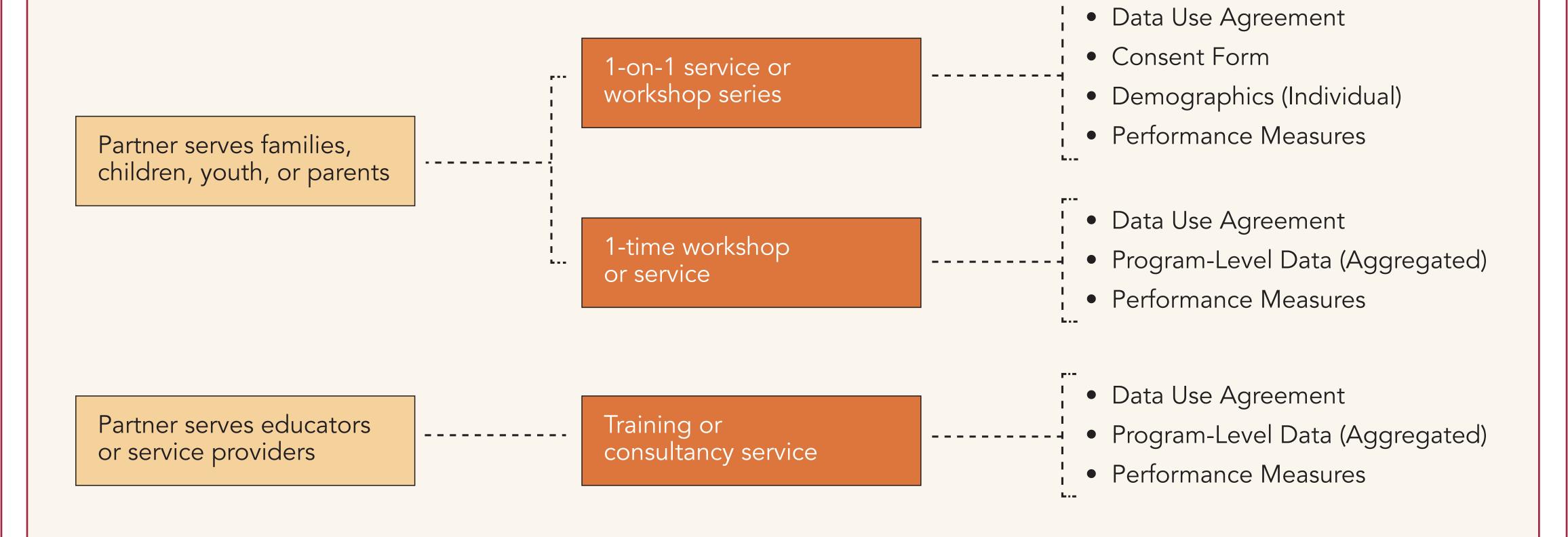— Phase One — Phase Two — Phase Three

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❸ Data Capacity Assessment Learnings

- Partners ranged in their capacity to collect core data elements
- All partners collected data about their services, but only 19 out of 24 partners utilized data to report on impact
- Just 17 out of 24 partners collect and track data about program impact
- Limited staff time, lack of data analysis expertise, and ineffective data management systems were challenges voiced by partners

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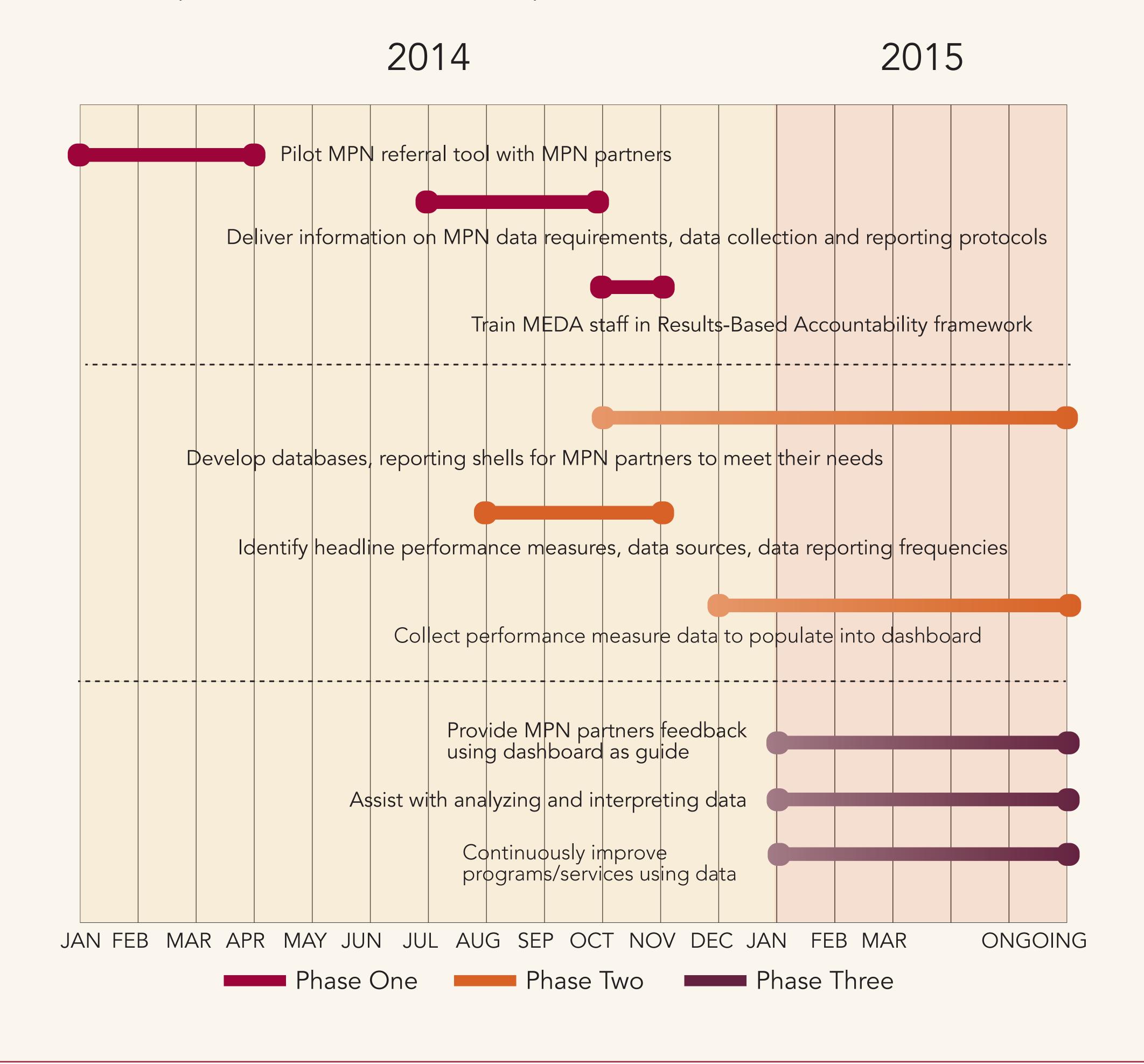### ❹ Partner Level of Service and Data Collection

Partner agencies collect varying types of program and participant data, depending on the agency's level of service. Our data capacity assessments lead us to discover that partners serving children, youth, and parents collect more demographic and case management data about their participants, while partners serving educators collect less data about their participants.

Partner serves families, children, youth, or parents
- 1-on-1 service or workshop series
  - Data Use Agreement
  - Consent Form
  - Demographics (Individual)
  - Performance Measures
- 1-time workshop or service
  - Data Use Agreement
  - Program-Level Data (Aggregated)
  - Performance Measures

Partner serves educators or service providers
- Training or consultancy service
  - Data Use Agreement
  - Program-Level Data (Aggregated)
  - Performance Measures

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❺ Technical Assistance Plan

An agency's ability to efficaciously communicate regarding their work—and the impact that work is having on the population served, explained via numbers (data)—is extremely important. Being able to utilize data to underscore the value of a program, in the form of results to diverse stakeholders and funders, can influence an agency's ability to continue delivering programs and services. For agencies to be advocates for their programs and services, they need data. Collecting the right set of data is a task that requires resources and know-how: this defines data capacity.

Through our technical assistance plan, we aim to strengthen the data capacity of our partners, with the outcome of helping them achieve measurable results and long-term sustainability. The goal is to build their repertoire of resources and know-how though providing resources and trainings to conduct their own evaluation processes to meet reporting needs and program objectives. Technical support has included assistance around implementing consent procedures, streamlining data collection processes, and identifying key performance measures for services.

2014 | **2015**

- Pilot MPN referral tool with MPN partners
- Deliver information on MPN data requirements, data collection and reporting protocols
- Train MEDA staff in Results-Based Accountability framework
- Develop databases, reporting shells for MPN partners to meet their needs
- Identify headline performance measures, data sources, data reporting frequencies
- Collect performance measure data to populate into dashboard
- Provide MPN partners feedback using dashboard as guide
- Assist with analyzing and interpreting data
- Continuously improve programs/services using data

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— Phase One — Phase Two — Phase Three

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❻ Lessons Learned

Consistent communication is key
- Data collection requires that internal team members and partner agency staff be on the same page
- Frequent communication is necessary so that all parties are clear on data reporting requirements

Build a system for continuous improvement
- Infrastructure must be developed before approaching partners, but it should also be flexible to allow fine tuning
- Ongoing, hands-on technical support and frequent guidance is necessary to prepare partners for data reporting

Foster a results-driven culture
- Data meetings should be objective driven and well planned to make them as time efficient as possible
- Foster an appreciation of the evaluation process by consistently reminding partners about why data is important

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